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ZELAYA AND NICARAGUA

(Continued from Page 13)

a volunteer soldier or recruit and put in the army.

On the other hand, the merchants, planters and business men of the country have had to increase their earnings as best they could and pay him oftentimes arbitrary tribute or taxation.

As an example of his methods in this respect, during an invasion of the country by a large force of revolutionists from Costa Rica, he kept a careful account of all expenditures in putting down the revolution, at the same time keeping tab on all the merchants, capitalists and planters who were in sympathy with or aided and abetted the revolution in any way. He then, after having put down the revolution, drew upon each one of these sympathizers for a specific amount, according to his capital,

to defray the expense of putting down the revolution.

It is frequently stated, and with a good deal of truth, that there is never more than one political party in Central America, and that is the party in power. But as a matter of fact, there is and always has been two well defined political parties. They are the conservatives on one side and the liberal on the other. The reason for its being stated that there is only one political party is the fact that whichever party is in power maintains its despotic sway to such an extent that no opposition dares show itself in any form whatsoever. Sometimes there is a pretense of having an election, but such an election is more than a farce for, should any misguided element of the population or section of the country be beguiled into believing that they are going to be allowed to vote sure enough and put up a candidate in opposition to the government program, the unfortunate candidate would be surely taken out and shot.

The great difference between the conservatives and the liberals is as much a family tradition as anything else. The conservatives, as a rule, belong to the older families, the families of the purest Spanish extraction that still remains in the country. They desire to preserve their religion and religious beliefs and consider the simple life of their forebears as much more preferable than the rapid pace of the progresistas or liberals. The liberals, on the other hand, strive to go at a mad pace, upsetting in their career all that is sacred and venerable in the country. They profess to hate the clergy; they frequently desecrate the churches and try to stamp out all religion. They are extravagant in their lives, in their mad career for gain and in everything else.

Zelaya has been the embodiment of this wild extravagance since he has been the ruler of Nicaragua, but he has managed to become immensely wealthy thereby. He has monopolized the few industries of the country or placed a tax upon them by which he alone is the beneficiary. He has controlled the customs houses, supervised and regulated the tariff, and, as a matter of fact, looked after the financial end of his business as president as well as that part of it necessary to maintain his government.

Zelaya's predominating characteristic is his courage. He is absolutely fearless, and that is one reason why he is more thoroughly hated than any one of the other Central American satraps. The other reason is, like that of his preceptor, old Barrios of Guatemala, his one ambition has been to unite the five republics under one government, with himself, of course, at its head. Various have been his schemes and projects to accomplish this end. At one time fomenting a revolution in Salvador, he has failed in that direction. At another time he succeeded in placing Davila in the presidential chair of Honduras with the understanding that Davila would unite Honduras to Nicaragua, only to have Davila tell him to go to the devil after his seat was safely secured, and Costa Rica has always been a thorn in his side because he couldn't get up any revolution there, in which something might accrue to his benefit or to his pet scheme. For these reasons Zelaya has come to be known as the mischief-maker of Central America.

Compared with some of the other rulers who are or who have been in the limelight, he is undoubtedly the boldest and bravest of them all, with the single exception, perhaps, of Castro of Venezuela. But he is a different type of man from Castro, who was of low origin and as vicious as he was low. Zelaya is educated,

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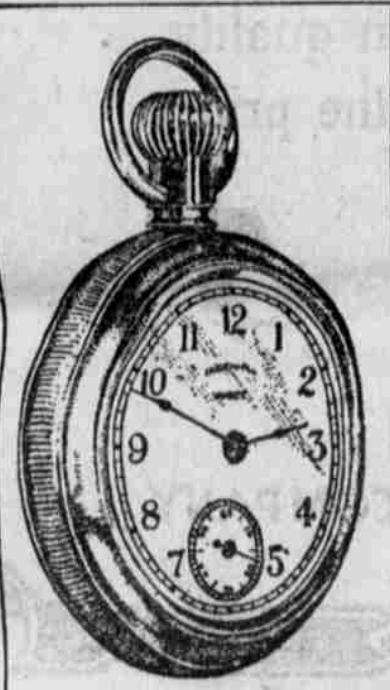
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